

and very good work has been accomplished, the chief drawback being the uncertainty of motor-cycle travelling. With slight alterations in this direction the utilization of itinerant instructors seems capable of extension. The Board is of opinion that the installation of swimming-baths in connection with schools is of great importance in promoting the general health and efficiency of scholars. Provision should therefore be made for the installation of baths at schools where an adequate water-supply can be obtained, and for the appointment of efficient instructors in swimming and life-saving.

Agricultural Instruction.—Primary schools: Increasingly good work has been accomplished, and improvement is most notable in the northern portion of the district. It should be noted in particular that the work attained in many of the schools in charge of lady teachers reached a high standard. The judging of dairy stock has become a most important phase of instruction to school-children, the agricultural and pastoral associations in the district being keenly interested in the matter.

Negotiations were entered into with the New Plymouth High School Board for the Board's instructors to take over the work of instruction in agriculture at the Boys' High School. Good work has been accomplished at Stratford District High School, the model farm giving excellent facilities for observational and practical field-work on a farm scale. The Board is of opinion that the arrangements under which the model farm is controlled might be with advantage adopted in other centres. The pupils under an agricultural-science master work out the official returns from crops and the necessary herd-testing.

District High Schools.—[See E.—6, Report on Secondary Education.]

Grade 0 Schools.—If the Government is sincere in its desire to open up the undeveloped lands of this Dominion, better provision will have to be made for the educational welfare of the children whose parents leave the centres to carve out homes in the backblocks. In spite of the small increases recently made, the capitation grant for Grade 0 schools is totally inadequate to secure the services of capable teachers, and in some cases of any teacher at all. This Board will not be satisfied until a teacher is supplied at a salary of not less than £120 per annum whenever there are six children. The present policy is an injustice to the children, and is retarding settlement. This question requires greater consideration than is being given to it at the present time.

Instructional Classes for Teachers.—Arrangements were made for Saturday classes at New Plymouth and Stratford for the instruction of teachers in the following subjects: Geometrical drawing, free and blackboard drawing, home science, hygiene, and practical agriculture, whilst arrangements were made for teachers unable to attend the Saturday classes, owing to distance, to receive tuition by correspondence.

Attendance.—The following is an abstract showing the number of schools, teachers, and pupils attending schools in the district, beginning with the year 1877, and every period of ten years, and at the end of 1918:—

Year ending	Schools.	Head or Sole Teachers.	Assistants.	Junior Teachers and Probationers.	Total.	December Quarter Roll Number.	Returns Average.
1877	23	23	7	2	32	726	496
1887	35	35	9	26	70	2,395	1,597
1897 ¹	60	60	18	29	107	3,845	3,018
1907	81	78	45	23	146	5,096	4,246
1917 ¹	153	153	125	46	324	10,019	9,007
1918	151	151	134	49	334	10,315	8,985

Visiting Schools.—During the year members of the Board visited various parts of the district. The direct knowledge thus gained of the special needs of those schools visited will be of material help when dealing with applications from Committees. The schools and grounds inspected were in general found to be in good order.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

R. MASTERS, Chairman.

WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Education Office, Wanganui, 31st March, 1919.

In accordance with the provisions of the Education Act I submit herewith a report on the progress of education in this district during the year 1918.

Board.—At the biennial election in July Mr. W. Bruce replaced Mr. R. J. Sewell for the Wanganui Urban Area; Mr. P. C. Freeth was elected for the Palmerston North Urban Area in place of Mr. E. L. Broad, who did not seek re-election; Messrs. A. Fraser and E. F. Hemingway were re-elected, the latter unopposed, for the South and West Wards respectively; Mr. R. L. Christie did not offer himself for re-election for the North Ward; Mr. J. J. Pilkington was elected to the vacancy unopposed. Mr. F. Pirani was re-elected Chairman. During Mr. Pirani's absence in England Mr. Fraser acted as Chairman, and carried out the duties of the office with conspicuous success and ability.